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# GCERF STRATEGY 2025

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. GCERF is the global fund for preventing violent extremism.
2. Our Strategy 2025 has been developed through extensive consultation, including with the governments and partners we support. It is intended to help us choose priorities; guide and discipline our decision-making; inspire our team; and engage our partners.
3. The starting point for this strategy is to learn lessons from the last one: our unique selling point remains strong; demand for our support currently outstrips our ability to deliver; we need a greater focus on sustainability, and on building and sharing knowledge; we can streamline our processes; and promoting our values and culture is fundamental.
4. We also need to understand that the world around us has changed: violent extremism has become more diffuse; ODA is under pressure; we can take advantage of the digital revolution; our approach should promote empowerment and the decolonisation of aid; we face more competition; and the COVID-19 pandemic will impact the way we work.
5. Against this background, we have reviewed our purpose. We propose a bolder vision, that the next generation can inherit and maintain a world where violent extremism has no place in politics or society; and a more specific mission statement, to fund and sustain community resilience against the drivers of violent extremism supporting local priorities.
6. We re-define resilience and our four outcomes: social cohesion, community agency, access to equal opportunities, and individual sense of purpose. We have added to our principles conflict-sensitive programming and results-based

management. We spell out our core values, making a difference, achieving together, acting with integrity, embracing diversity, and realising potential.

7. Our strategic plan is guided by clear criteria for entering and exiting both countries and communities, which will determine our rate of expansion over the next three years. We identify three clear strategic goals: impact, scale, and influence; and three critical strategic enablers: people, technology and resources.
8. High-quality programming is the best way to achieve impact, by better integrating grantees in programme design and delivery, better use of research, evidence, and data, and capacity-bridging.
9. Over the next three years GCERF will reach more people, support more organisations, and build the resilience of more communities, in more countries. We will achieve scale by setting ambitious goals, increasing our reach per dollar, building a global alliance of PVE partners, and being agile.
10. We will also increase our influence, sharing effective practices; expanding strategic partnerships; defining a policy and advocacy role; and assuming a greater donor coordination responsibility.
11. We will continue to invest in our people, ensuring representative and inclusive leadership; supporting the unique employee experience at GCERF; and strengthening our culture and living our values. We will also invest significantly in technology.
12. Ultimately, fully to implement this strategy GCERF needs to secure funding at a sufficient and predictable level. We have started this process through our replenishment campaign which sets us on course to a multi-year funding cycle.

## INTRODUCTION

In a less predictable world, a clear strategy is more important than ever. GCERF's Strategy 2025 is intended to help us choose priorities; guide and discipline our decision-making; inspire our team; and engage our partners. We will review and update it regularly. It is structured in three main parts: Our Starting Point, Our Purpose, and Our Strategic Plan.

# OUR STARTING POINT

Strategy 2025 builds on our 2017–20 Strategy, taking stock of where we succeeded and where we fell short, and why. It also responds to the way the world has changed around us since our first strategy, and in particular the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## LESSONS LEARNED FROM OUR PREVIOUS STRATEGY

### What we are doing and how we are doing it remains relevant

GCERF's first strategy was written when we had been making and managing grants for less than a year, and our organisation and approach was still at proof-of-concept phase. Over the last few years, supporting community efforts to address the drivers of violent extremism has become more generally accepted as important; GCERF's unique added value for this endeavour as a multi-stakeholder global fund has been recognised; and we have achieved demonstrable results, as verified by independent external evaluations.

### Our ambition and capacity are not yet aligned

It is clear that we have not achieved the level of funding anticipated in our first strategy, which estimated that annual contributions of about US\$50 million would be required by 2020 to sustain a steady growth. Equally striking, however, is that we are nevertheless now managing more grants, and in more countries, than envisaged would be supported by this level of financial commitment. There is a clear and growing demand for GCERF, but inadequate funding at present to respond. In response, we are now adjusting to a multi-year funding cycle, to generate more, and more predictable, funding for GCERF and in turn our partners.

### We need to re-think sustainability

GCERF has by and large adhered to sustainability, a core principle identified in the first strategy. Since then, we have renewed grant agreements with 11 grantees across four countries (Bangladesh, Kosovo, Mali, Nigeria), such that in some cases we have been supporting local grantees for five years. While in 2017 sustainability meant distinguishing GCERF from the trend of short-term PVE grants, now it means planning forward for when direct GCERF funding stops. This strategy identifies clear criteria for entry into and exit out of countries and communities and emphasises capacity-bridging with local NGOs to help them continue to attract funds and build community resilience after GCERF grants end, with the support of national governments.

### We need to do more to build and share knowledge

Building and sharing knowledge was one part of the three-pronged approach identified in our last strategy. We have not made the same progress here, as we have towards achieving the other two – funding community-level efforts and aligning responses to local needs. In this strategy, building and sharing knowledge remains a critical strategic goal, we now describe it as influencing. We are more likely to achieve influence over the next three years, because we now have a solid global evidence-base and more international credibility.

### Our processes need to be streamlined

The places we work are complicated, as is what we are trying to achieve, but that doesn't mean our ways of working have to be. While always managing risk and maintaining compliance, we need to focus more on outcomes and less on process. Later in this document, we list a series of things we commit to stop doing to make GCERF simpler, more effective, and more efficient. We hope that this purpose is also reflected in this strategy document, which is intended to be direct, jargon-free, and simple.

### It's about who we are as much as what we do and how we do it

Our first strategy focused on what we do and how we do it. We have learned over the last few years that who we are – our values and culture – is the key determinant of whether we succeed. This strategy includes an entirely new section on our core values, and places significant emphasis on continuing to build our culture, both within our team, and in our interactions with grantees and external partners. In this way we are also redefining our organisational boundaries, seeking to integrate our Board, our partners, our expert advisors, our grantees, and our programme beneficiaries, into a distinct and positive ecosystem.



## HOW THE WORLD AROUND US HAS CHANGED

### Violent extremism has become more diffuse

When GCERF was established at the end of 2014, the violent extremist landscape was largely characterised by a global hotspot in Syria and Iraq, and some local actors, sometimes loosely associated, operating sporadically in localities of longstanding insecurity. Today the return of foreign terrorist fighters and their families remains an intractable legacy issue, global movements such as AQ and ISIS are resurging in new places, and far-right, nationalist, and other forms of violent extremism are emerging. In response, this strategy proposes, first, to establish an 'emerging issues' fund, with a rapid decision-making process, to enable us to disburse funds to implement projects quickly in communities in our partner countries that are within our reach when they are newly at risk. And second, to emphasise GCERF's role in informing and influencing policies in geographies where it does not work, but where its lessons can still be of value.

### This is a period of austerity for ODA

We need to acknowledge in the COVID-19 era that it is likely that Official Development Assistance will become more focused on global health and reduce overall. Donors will be more demanding. In response, this strategy places greater emphasis on achieving outcomes, and demonstrating return on investment. But it is also important that GCERF continues to mobilise resources from the security sector and propel the development-security nexus; develops joint funding initiatives with new partners; and continues to mobilise private sector support.

### Digitisation and new technologies are accelerating

COVID-19 may result in a technological revolution in preventing violent extremism, and GCERF needs to consider the potential benefits and pitfalls. There may be a case to promote digital inclusion, so that more GCERF grant recipients have access to digital technology, but only if we also promote digital literacy and responsible digital citizenship to mitigate the risk of more online radicalisation and recruitment. We need to reflect how digital solutions may transform our own operating model, without underestimating the importance of building relationships in person. And how can digital solutions be part of long-term resilience building in affected communities, for example strengthening local participation in democracy, or expanding local markets? This strategy identifies an investment in technology as a critical enabler.

### There is a renewed focus on localisation

The pandemic has accelerated a focus that has emerged over the last few years on the role of local NGOs as first responders. For the last five years GCERF has invested almost exclusively in local NGOs and will continue to, while upscaling investment in their capacity. Spurred by a series of online Global Communities of Practice events, we will formalise a global alliance of PVE partners against violent extremism, sharing lessons with and between local NGOs and expanding GCERF's reach and impact. We will also redouble our efforts to engage local private companies to support our efforts.

### Issues of systemic inequality can no longer be ignored

The past year has thrown into sharp relief issues of inequality and uneven power relationships and accelerated the agenda of decolonising aid. Across our organisation, from reporting to donors to retaining our talent to building trust among our grant recipients, these issues must be taken seriously. This strategy places a significant emphasis on the values, culture, and behaviours of our organisation. We seek to empower GCERF grantees, in the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of programmes, and as members of our global alliance. We also seek to redefine our partnerships with the countries where we work, replacing the term 'beneficiary country' with 'partner country' across all our statements, and reinforcing the principles of country and community ownership.

### There are more organisations working on preventing violent extremism

GCERF remains the only international organisation with a specific and exclusive mandate on preventing violent extremism. We also insist that the investment already made in GCERF – over US\$100m – and the results we have achieved – should weigh against the international community investing in any new mechanism to provide grants to local communities on PVE or related fields. At the same time, clearly there are other organisations working on PVE at the community or other levels, or on related issues at the community level, and it is important that GCERF forges strong and complementary partnerships. We will develop new partnerships, for example with IOM, and work hard to operationalise our existing MoUs, for example with UNOCT, Hedayah, and IJJ, maintaining and capitalising on our unique profile.

## COVID-19

### The pandemic has resulted in more violent extremism, and less resilience

Early on during the pandemic, we surveyed most of our grantees about the immediate impact of COVID-19. They reported two trends, first that violent extremist groups are mobilising around new narratives for example against governments for locking down communities, or against minorities who are easy scapegoats; and second that community mobilisation in response is reducing, as more young people go online, and traditional community and religious events cannot take place. There is every indication that COVID-19 will continue to impact the communities GCERF supports throughout this strategy period, for example violent extremist groups are now rallying around the anti-vaccination campaign and may instrumentalise further restrictions, and millions of young people will be out of work for the foreseeable future.



### COVID-19 will impact the way we work for the next three years at least

This strategy makes the following key assumptions about COVID-19:

- The communities we support will be near the back of the line for vaccines and will experience the health, economic and social consequences of the pandemic for the next few years
- The economic impact of the crisis in donor countries will be severe and long-lasting, placing greater pressure on ODA
- Movement restrictions and other measures to control the pandemic will significantly impact the way people work and travel, and we will need to adapt to remote working and the use of digital technology

### Community trust is hard to win and easy to lose

At the start of the pandemic, GCERF re-purposed a proportion of its current grants to provide support to the immediate priorities of our grantees, such as personal protective equipment (PPE). What we learned was that in order to maintain the confidence of grantees and their communities, which is critical if we want their support to prevent violent extremism, then we need to be sensitive to their priorities. This is the ultimate expression of our commitment to a bottom-up approach. If communities report that violent extremists are radicalising the youth through misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccine, then public health messaging becomes a valid PVE intervention.

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# OUR PURPOSE

Our Vision, Mission, Theory of Change, and Principles have largely stood the test of time since our first strategy. But we have revisited them and where appropriate revised them to update our purpose.

## VISION

**'The next generation can inherit and maintain a world where violent extremism has no place in politics or society'**

Our vision statement is intended to describe the intended long-term results of our efforts. In our first strategy it was modest: 'Peaceful and inclusive communities are resilient to violent extremism and achieve sustainable development'. Our new statement is more ambitious. At the end of this strategy period, the world will have five years left to achieve the SDGs. We maintain that SDG 16 in particular cannot be achieved without significantly reducing violent extremism, while it will also be a barrier for millions of people to realise other development goals and benefits of globalisation. If we cannot envisage a new generation without violent extremism, then we cannot envisage Agenda 2030 succeeding and sustaining.

## MISSION

**'To fund and sustain community resilience to combat the drivers of violent extremism supporting local priorities'**

We have also revised our original mission statement: 'We are a multi-stakeholder global fund that strengthens community resilience by supporting local initiatives to address the drivers of violent extremism'. First, we no longer think it is necessary to explain that GCERF is a multi-stakeholder global fund – in line with this entire strategy our focus should be on what we do not what we are. Second, the pandemic has taught us that building community resilience is one thing, maintaining it another. This strategy places considerable emphasis on sustaining the gains within local communities for example through capacity-bridging. Third, we want to be clearer that our job is to help communities address the drivers of violent extremism. If communities tell us that violent extremists are recruiting the victims of human trafficking because they are particularly susceptible, then supporting those victims and raising awareness about human trafficking is a legitimate PVE intervention. If they tell us that minorities are being radicalised because they are at the back of the line for the COVID-19 vaccine, then promoting equal access to the vaccine is a legitimate PVE intervention.

## OUTCOMES

Outcomes define the change we want to see in the communities we support and therefore are our ultimate success.

### Resilience

In our work, resilience is a dynamic attribute of communities and individuals to resist and respond in a non-violent way to internal and external shocks, including violent extremism. Resilient communities and individuals are not completely immune to violent extremism, but their resilience protects them from violent extremists' efforts to polarise societies and legitimise violence as a means to achieve political, religious, or social goals. If resilience is the barrier, its building blocks are what we call factors of resilience: social cohesion, community agency, access to socio-economic opportunities, and individual sense of purpose. GCERF recognises that these factors of resilience are mutually reinforcing. Achieving one without the other may even raise risks – for example if individuals with increased sense of purpose and confidence feel frustrated because they lack access to opportunities or feel excluded by society or downtrodden by authorities, their frustrations and grievances may increase. We therefore support at-risk individuals and communities through programmes that integrate interventions that work, sustainably, across those four resilience factors, and we measure our success through strengthening these factors in communities and individuals we support.



### Social cohesion

Violent extremist groups exploit divisions between religious, ethnic, and social groups, and gender fault lines. GCERF-funded programmes enhance social cohesion by creating channels of communication and fostering tolerance and trust between these groups, including equipping them with tools to resolve their disputes peacefully. Our experience shows that socially cohesive and inclusive communities are more resilient to violent extremist propaganda than those fragmented.



### Community agency

Strained relationships between authorities and communities are often instrumentalised by violent extremist groups. GCERF-funded programmes build the capacities of communities, and marginalised groups within them such as minorities, women and youth, to represent themselves and advocate for their interests with local authorities. Our programmes also promote the legitimacy of local authorities' in engaging with communities. In this way we help generate or re-establish accountability and trust between communities and authorities, ultimately paving the way for joint action to prevent violent extremism.



### Access to socio-economic opportunities

Unequal access to socio-economic opportunities not only generates grievances but also renders individuals and communities more vulnerable to violent extremist groups offering material resources, social services, and social standing. We work with individuals, often women, who are excluded from local economies and societies to equip them with knowledge, tools, and resources to access, and benefit from, social and economic opportunities, making them and their communities less vulnerable. We see a particular role for private sector partnerships in achieving this factor of resilience.



### Individual sense of purpose

Individuals – especially youth – who lack a sense of belonging, self-esteem, or even hope in their future, are more prone to accept violent extremist propaganda. GCERF works with vulnerable youth and structures around them to develop their individual sense of purpose and self-esteem, providing them with the tools to assess information critically, manage their emotions, challenge gender stereotypes, accept and tolerate divergences of opinion, and ultimately envision a better future for themselves.

## PRINCIPLES

### Abiding by our principles

GCERF's first strategy identified seven core principles, to which we have adhered and will continue to:

- COMPREHENSIVE RISK MANAGEMENT
- INDEPENDENCE
- COUNTRY-OWNERSHIP
- CONTEXT RELEVANCE
- SUSTAINABILITY
- GENDER RESPONSIVENESS
- ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

We have updated the final principle in this list, to be explicit about our commitment to transparency. Our experience over the last three years has also led us to add two further principles to this list: conflict sensitive programming, and results-based management.

### Conflict-sensitive programming

Conflict-sensitive programming involves close scrutiny of the operational context, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on the context. This means that we have to review constantly the interactions between the context in local communities and our programmes there. The best way to do this is to continue to promote direct and unabridged feedback from our grantees, and involve them as partners throughout the programme cycle of design, delivery, and monitoring and evaluation, also helping bridge their capacity on conflict-sensitive programming.

### Results-based management

Results-based management is a management strategy focusing on performance and the achievement of results, and we will continue to apply it at both the programming and corporate levels. All GCERF grants integrate a results-framework defining expected results, which are assessed both by regular reporting by grantees and also third-party monitoring and external evaluations exercises. At country level, GCERF is defining core indicators for all its new country investment strategies, which in turn, will enable GCERF to aggregate results at the global portfolio level through a framework aligned with the four factors of resilience. At the corporate level, GCERF will identify key performance indicators for this new strategic cycle, which we will routinely report on, enabling our Board and other stakeholders to track progress on the implementation and achievement of GCERF's Strategy 2025, and hold us to account.



## CORE VALUES

Over the last few years, we have realised how important values are as a clear benchmark for how we treat our colleagues and our partners. The #MeToo and BLM movements are beginning to change the world. Our values will continue to guide our leadership and our team in our day-to-day behaviors and decision making. GCERF's five core values are: achieving together, acting with integrity, realising potential, embracing diversity, and making a difference.

### Making a difference

In everything we do at GCERF we have the goal of making a difference to create a more peaceful and inclusive world. In the communities where we work, we provide opportunities and alternatives for people that make a real difference in their lives and of those around them. Mirroring this within our own team, we aim to make a positive impact on the life paths of colleagues so they can keep making a difference at GCERF and beyond.

### Achieving together

Preventing violent extremism is complex and multidimensional, and achieving together is fundamental to tackling it. We draw on and combine the broad range of experience and perspectives among our team, partners, and multi-stakeholder Governing Board, to develop the best response for each context. Within our team, we have a consultative culture that informs decision-making; as we expand, we will seek to be even more fluid in the ways we collaborate, supporting each other to get the best results.

### Acting with integrity

We must always act with integrity, from how we manage human resources and finances, to programmatic decision-making, our relationships with each other, and everything in between. We have a strong sense of responsibility and always aim to do no harm. Our systems to detect and manage fraud and misconduct are robust, including an integrity line for whistleblowing. Acting with integrity also means that we do what we say we will do, whether that is promises made between colleagues while collaborating on day-to-day work, or commitments made to our Governing Board and partners. We are honest in our feedback and all communications. In this way we understand that acting with integrity is fundamental to building trust internally and externally.

### Embracing diversity

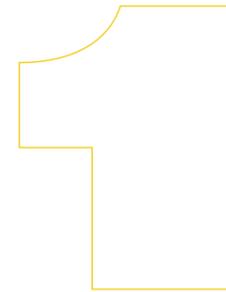
Embracing diversity is at the core of who we are. We take special care to ensure our human resources management processes are free from biases related to age, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and other personal characteristics. Among our team, our grantees, our Independent Review Panel, and our Governing Board, we have a unique diversity of experience, perspective, and expertise. Our diversity is our strength: we draw on our differences to come up with better solutions to the challenges we face. As we implement this strategy, while being sensitive to different contexts, we will make more of an effort to facilitate the sharing of diverse perspectives across our networks with the purpose of supporting more impactful interventions.

### Realising potential

In the same way that we seek to realise the potential of local organisations in the communities where we work by funding their good ideas and supporting them to grow their capacity and impact, we manage our team and our relationships in ways that maximise our internal resources and bring out our full potential. Team members at all levels are provided opportunities to be challenged or to work beyond their formal job titles and we want to ensure that, where needed, they get training to enhance their skills and deepen their impact. We also want to maximise the potential of our Governing Board and our Independent Review Panel, by engaging them more closely in our work with local organisations and developing knowledge.

# OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Our strategic plan is guided by clear criteria for entering and exiting both countries and communities, which will determine our rate of expansion over the next three years. We have three clear strategic goals: impact, scale, and influence. And we have identified three critical strategic enablers: people, resources, and technology.



## ENTRY AND EXIT CRITERIA

In our commitment to focus where we can make the most difference and the best use of our resources, we have developed criteria to guide our decisions to enter or exit both countries and communities for programming.

### We will enter countries where all three of the following are true:

- There is a commitment by the national government and approval by the GCERF Governing Board
- There is an adequate funding commitment to allow GCERF to launch a meaningful and sustainable intervention
- There is a strategic logic, for example expanding GCERF's presence across a particular region or sector

### We will exit countries when any of the following are true:

- GCERF can no longer achieve its mandate unimpeded
- There is a political decision to withdraw by either the national government or GCERF Governing Board
- There is no longer a funding commitment to GCERF to ensure financial sustainability

### We will enter communities where all three of the following are true:

- There is a growing risk of violent extremism
- We can add value with new or complementary funding
- There is a funding commitment to GCERF to allow us to deliver programmes

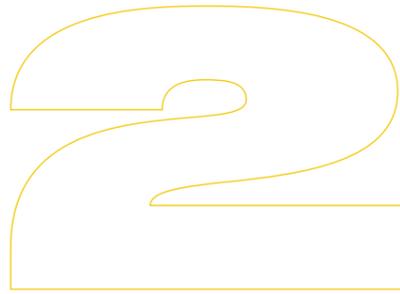
### We will exit communities when any of the following are true:

- The risk of violent extremism has significantly diminished
- The funding gap has been filled
- Local NGOs have the capacity to attract and manage resources themselves

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## IMPACT

Impact is how we contribute to the meaningful change we hope to see achieved in the communities we support. It is our commitment to our grantees and to our donors. High-quality programming is the best way to achieve impact. We have already started to orient all our programmes around impact, all of which are now informed by an evidence-based theory of change and targeted on specific outcomes and practical methods to bring about change. In this strategy we will strengthen this emphasis on impact.

### Integrating grantees in programme design and delivery

Promoting conflict-sensitive programming, GCERF emphasises an organic approach by fully engaging our grantee local NGOs, as well as local authorities and Country Support Mechanisms, in designing, delivering, monitoring and evaluating programmes. We apply a systematic approach across the programme cycle, commencing with a four-week long proposal development workshop, through quarterly coordination meetings, to field visits across all our portfolios.

### Better use of research and evidence

Over the past few years, GCERF has tested and confirmed best practices and key lessons in PVE practice and policy across its portfolio. In this strategy cycle, we will continue to improve our monitoring and evaluation systems, and systematically use the results to inform higher-quality programming. At the national level, this will be supported by Local Knowledge Partners that will systematically gather data on GCERF-supported programmes, producing detailed analysis through a conflict and gender-sensitive approach- and translating this into recommendations for future programming and wider dissemination.

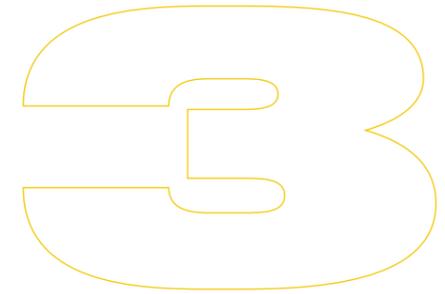
### Better use of data to make decisions for impact

We will increasingly use data and spatial analysis to inform decision-making, to strategically guide intervention prioritisation, improve monitoring and evaluation, and seek evidence on programme impact. We are currently piloting an analytical project in Nigeria, using big data, remote sensing, and social media to create risk and vulnerability community profiles, to identify communities most susceptible to the influence of violent extremism.

### Capacity-bridging

We will build on our Global Capacity Strengthening Guidelines to further enhance partner capacity. For our local NGO partners, a systematic approach will be applied throughout the partnership, including increasing skills on how to design a Theory of Change, strengthen security risk management, monitoring and evaluation, conflict sensitive programming, and gender mainstreaming. We will also invest in peer-to-peer learning through National and Global Communities of Practice events and our new global alliance. In partnership with organisations like UNOCT and Hedayah working on capacity-bridging at the national level, we will seek to extend our capacity-bridging remit to the intermediary level of sub-national authorities.

Specific attention will be paid to conflict sensitive programming from the capacity-bridging perspective. This includes modules on how to make conflict-sensitive decisions; applying conflict sensitivity tools to identify and manage the risks entailed in working on conflict; formulating options to adapt activities and leverage opportunities for building and sustaining peace through conflict sensitivity; and acknowledging and discussing conflict sensitivity challenges and dilemmas.



## SCALE

Our first strategy cycle defined our approach and proved our concept, in selected test cases. The next strategic cycle is about scaling up. Assuming a successful replenishment campaign, GCERF will reach more people, support more organisations, and build the resilience of more communities, in more countries. This will be achieved directly, through expanding our portfolio, and indirectly, by sharing lessons with local organisations outside GCERF's portfolio but within our global alliance.

### Set ambitious goals

By 2025, GCERF will:

- Provide positive alternatives for 2 million people living in communities directly at risk of radicalisation
- Expand its presence to 10 more countries including in the Sahel, Southern and Eastern Africa, the Middle East and West and Central Asia, while ensuring a lasting impact in countries where GCERF is already present
- Train and equip 25,000 community and religious leaders and peace ambassadors to lead the fight against violent extremism in their communities
- Support governments and other partners to implement 20 national action plans on violent extremism at the local level, elevating the role of civil society in national policy
- Establish a network of local knowledge partners that will provide GCERF and the international community with the necessary lessons and evidence-based assessment of what works and what doesn't
- Enable a global alliance of community action against violent extremism



### Increase our reach per dollar

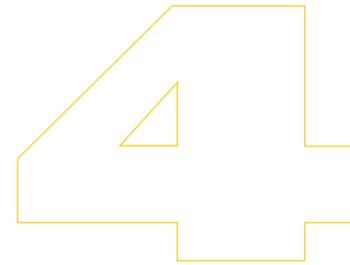
As a global fund, our core costs do not dramatically increase or decrease in response to our level of funding. For every dollar that GCERF receives and invests, the proportion spent to offset operational and programmatic costs declines. We will extend these economies of scale to our programs, investing for example in small infrastructure projects (like youth centers) that have significant reach but a minimum financial threshold for viability.

### Build a global alliance of PVE partners

Preventing violent extremism is a relatively new area of programming, and there are still few experts or communities of practice in most of GCERF's partner countries. Our partners have identified this as a barrier to designing and implementing effective and efficient programs. To fill this gap, we will create a global alliance of PVE partners, initially local NGOs but extending to include other partners like local governance structures, through which they can pool and share knowledge and tools, identify effective solutions and potential collaborations, and establish common advocacy agendas. This will allow us to maintain a link to partners in countries out of which GCERF transitions, and to provide non-financial support in countries facing violent extremist challenges that are not yet GCERF partner countries. The alliance will also open new possibilities for private sector engagement, including through mentoring, training, and potential sponsorship.

### Be more agile

To enable greater – and more immediate – reach, we propose to establish an 'emerging issues' fund as enabled by donor requirements. By allocating a small percentage of each donor contribution to this fund, GCERF will have a strategic reserve quickly to deliver funding and launch projects, to address emergencies and prevent escalation in partner communities or elsewhere in partner countries.



## INFLUENCE

Over the next strategic cycle, we will pay more attention to field-building to promote the global impact of preventing violent extremism. We will increase our influence by sharing effective practices, research and learning, convening partnerships with critical actors, defining a policy and advocacy role at the national, regional, and global levels, and developing a coordination role among PVE donors in our partner countries.

### Sharing effective practices, research and learning

Drawing on our unique portfolio, knowledge, and experience, we will share with the wider community effective practices, for example on programming, monitoring and evaluation, and compliance, and research and learning. This collected knowledge may form the basis for the development of global PVE standards. We have our sights set on launching a global innovation hub as a springboard for new ideas and innovation, helping societies and economies face future challenges of violent extremism and meet the rising aspirations of communities. The hub will harness the experience and expertise of our global alliance, to support action-oriented research on current gaps in knowledge, driving prototyping, and piloting small-scale experimental interventions.

### Expanding strategic partnerships

Building upon our existing partnerships with the GCTF, UNOCT, Hedayah, and IJJ, and others, we will continue to develop strategic, complementary and action-oriented partnerships that will amplify our influence. In particular we will strengthen our partnerships with relevant agencies of the United Nations, International Geneva-based institutions, global research centres and universities, and the private sector, always making sure not to detract from our unique, locally-focused and agile approach. We will also seek partnerships with specialised agencies, in order to raise funds and implement projects jointly.

### Defining a policy and advocacy role

We will advocate – always based on evidence – that preventing violent extremism works; and works best when affected communities are in the lead. We will promote the concept that preventing violent extremism is a global public good, in particular in order to lift barriers to achieving SDG 16 in an inclusive and gender-sensitive manner, but also to facilitate the global reach of public policy goals for health, education, and public security. Already we are partnering with the GCTF CVE Working Group on an 'Initiative on Funding and Enabling Community-Level P/CVE: Challenges, Recommendations and Emerging Good Practices', to enable funding for community level initiatives on preventing violent extremism.

### A greater donor coordination role

We have an increasing presence in our partner countries. This will allow us to contribute more effectively to existing donor coordination mechanisms on PVE in our partner countries, and establish and lead new mechanisms where they do not currently exist. While GCERF may not always be the largest PVE donor in partner countries, we are uniquely positioned to assume a coordination role, as we pool resources from many of these donors, have strong relationships with governments, and the unique capacity to leverage civil society and the private sector.

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# 5

## PEOPLE

We are proud to have a global workforce with a rich diversity of races, religions, identities, and backgrounds. We have made a good start, but we need to do more. As we plan to implement this strategy, we will discuss, develop, and publish our diversity, equity, and inclusion targets. We are also committed to fostering a culture in which every staff member feels safe, empowered, respected, and supported. We will continue working on making our structure more resilient and agile, in order to support the objectives of this strategy; and bounce back and thrive during and after disruptions. We will strengthen our team by ensuring representative and inclusive leadership and management, supporting the unique employee experience at GCERF, and living our values in order to strengthen our organisational culture.

### Ensuring representative and inclusive leadership and management

We have a small, diverse leadership team that builds a sound and trustworthy environment connected to a common vision. Strong and supportive management is critical for staff retention, productivity, and satisfaction; and also enables high-quality and timely programmatic and strategic decisions. As we implement this strategy, we will be fair but ruthless in building a high-quality gender-balanced management team, that has the right competences and management skills. We will improve our approach to recruitment; and continue creating internal growth opportunities for our most talented staff. We will strengthen our training and performance management; and continue improving human resources systems to enable better people management. We believe that representative and

inclusive leadership is also important at the level of the Governing Board and will continue to review this through regular Board self-assessments.

### Supporting the unique employee experience at GCERF

We recognise that in this less predictable world, we should build a strong and resilient organisation. We will continue creating a unique experience for our team by inspiring our colleagues with new and exciting challenges, encouraging them to share their knowledge and ideas, providing a supportive environment where we take risks and tolerate failure, and fostering health and wellbeing within the team. We will also continue investing in learning and development to motivate and mobilise our talent. Building critical skills and competencies is necessary for achieving our objectives in a changing environment. We will continue to ensure



that every team member has the opportunity to develop their skills.

### Strengthening our culture and living our values

Over this strategy cycle, we will invest time and energy in strengthening our distinct GCERF culture based on feedback, knowledge-sharing and learning, strong and supporting leadership, collaboration, innovation, and adaptation. Our culture is created by our shared vision and sense of purpose and it is supported by our core values. We will continue to support our team to articulate our values as expected behaviours, that account for local contexts. We will hold all our leaders accountable for role-modelling positive behaviours, driving accountability, and enforcing our zero-tolerance policy for any type of misconduct, including sexual harassment and fraud.

# 6

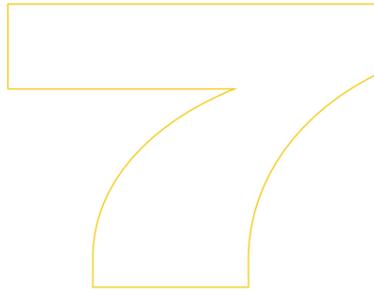
## TECHNOLOGY

During the previous strategy cycle, GCERF built basic but effective IT systems with the limited available financial resources. In the context of COVID-19 and its aftermath, we will need to be ready to work differently both as a team, and with our partners, and technology will be a critical enabler for this strategy.

We will invest in creating strong systems and frameworks primarily so that we can continue to support our partner organisations.

At the Secretariat level, we will take stock of our current IT framework, assess risks and opportunities, and design an infrastructure that will support the objectives of this strategy. We will need to define our IT strategies to create a series of business processes that will increase efficiency, stability, and maturity over time.

At the grant management level, we will invest in software to better manage an increasing number of grants. We will reassess our finance and administration tools and will automate processes whenever possible and relevant. We will also invest in some technological tools that support our decision-making for programming, such as data visualisation and heat mapping. We aim to provide IT support and capacity building for our grantees; and will assess the need for investing in equipment for them such as internet hotspots, smart phones, and ICT. We will also invest in creating a framework and interactive platform for our new global alliance, to facilitate peer-to-peer learning.



## RESOURCES

In order fully to implement this strategy, GCERF will have to secure funding at a sufficient and predictable level. With our 2020 replenishment campaign, we are increasing our public-facing communication, raising our profile, and moving towards a multi-year funding cycle. We will advocate for an increase of current donors' contributions, and work on expanding our donor base, including developing financial support from the private sector. We will partner with specialised agencies to raise funds and implement projects jointly. We will continue to manage contributions effectively, reduce financial and fiduciary risks to the lowest level possible, strengthen our internal control systems, and streamline our policies and processes. Our finance team will receive training to reinforce our internal capacities. We will seek support from the Finance and Audit Committee whenever required and strictly follow any recommendations from our external auditors.

### Pursue multi-year, non-earmarked funding

During the last strategy period, a high proportion of earmarked funding generated significant transaction costs, reducing our flexibility, and impacting our capacity to achieve our ultimate goals. We will continue to advocate for multi-year non-earmarked funding - or soft earmarked funding - in order better to deliver on our key objectives, to allocate funds where they are most needed, to invest in new countries, and to respond to unexpected challenges.

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### Re-visit our private sector strategy

We will continue to pursue the vision of GCERF as a public-private partnership, building on lessons learned and modest successes to ensure the private sector plays a more strategic role in the prevention of violent extremism. Building on our growing credibility and proven results, we will seek strategic, targeted partnerships, for example with social media companies. The focus will remain on in-country, impactful engagements, with the addition of targeted, high-level engagement at the global level to facilitate financial contributions. We will develop a Private Sector Engagement Framework to ensure ethical, strategic engagement with the private sector for the prevention of violent extremism.

### Investing for impact

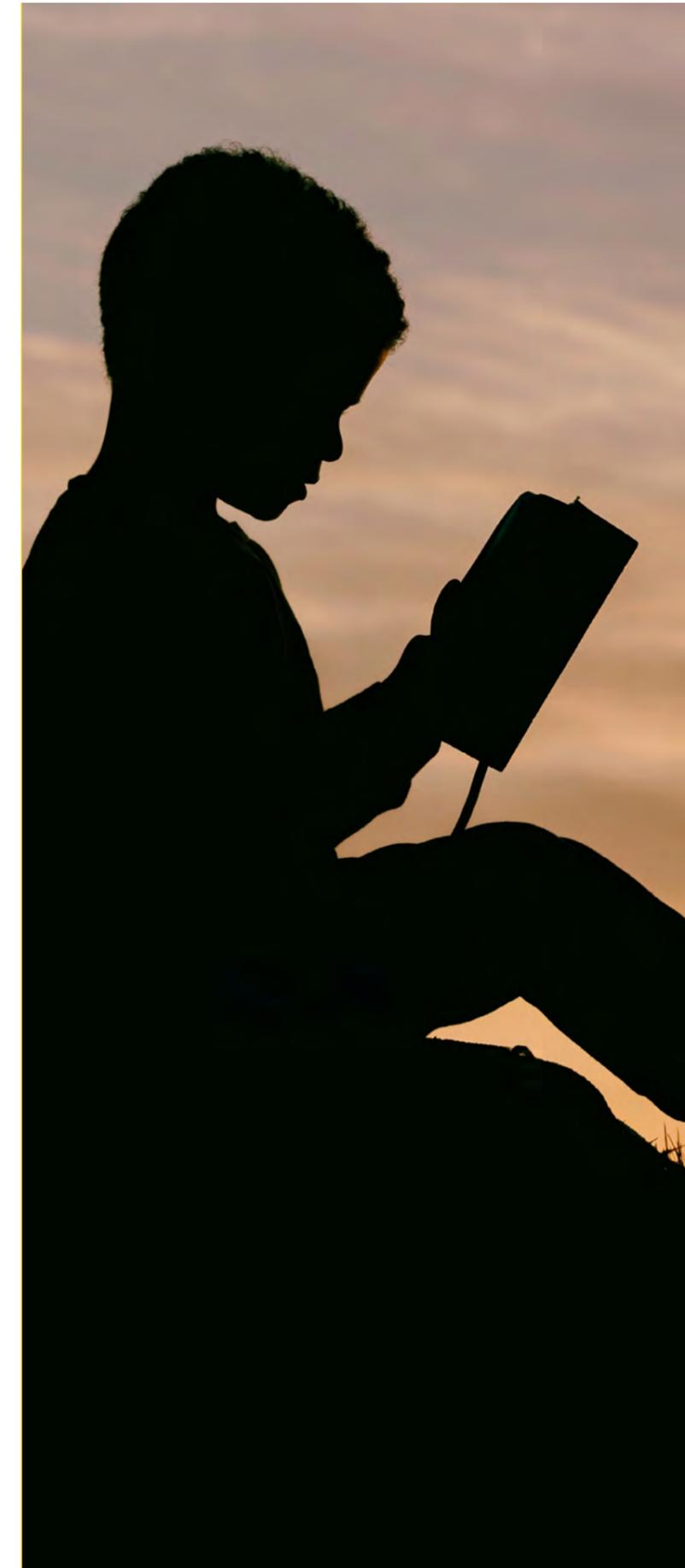
We will continue our efforts to drive down our operating expenses, but we also need to invest to have an impact. Building on our experience in Mali, the Philippines, Kenya and Somalia, we will now invest in National Advisors and National Monitors in every partner country where permissible. We will also strengthen our information and technology, and financial, systems, particularly in grant management, to better manage our grants in an expanding portfolio.

### Things we can stop doing and things we can do more efficiently

As part of the implementation of this strategy we need to free up resources and capacity by identifying things we can stop doing and things we can do more efficiently. We commit to:

- Cease maintaining or opening programmes in countries or communities that do not satisfy our entry and exit criteria
- Stop accepting contributions that do not cover an acceptable level of our costs, have incommensurate reporting requirements, or cannot be easily allocated
- Streamline our funding models
- Automate and simplify our administrative processes
- Reduce the number of individuals involved in decisions
- Reduce costly travel and build on our experience of working remotely

The benefits of these efficiencies will take time and entail some upfront costs, but they are essential to our organisational effectiveness and the achievement of our strategy.



# CONCLUSION

This strategy document started by reflecting on lessons learned from the last one.

A further lesson is that we were not systematic enough in implementing the strategy, nor in assessing and reporting on progress towards its goals. Clear line of sight on our funding situation for the next three years, will allow us to sequence and develop the appropriate investments, implementation plans and strategies, policies and processes, and performance indicators, to deliver Strategy 2025.



## ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

This strategy was developed through an inclusive process involving consultations with the whole Secretariat team, grantees, the Governing Board, the Independent Review Panel, and Country Support Mechanism chairs. At the outset, all these stakeholders were invited to complete a questionnaire to review the first GCERF strategy and provide forward looking feedback. We held initial discussions on the direction of the new strategy with a Board strategy reference group and had a workshop with the Secretariat team to review our vision, mission, core principles, and approaches.

The Strategy document itself was drafted in-house with many colleagues contributing, and those who didn't were busy keeping everything else running.

# GCERF STRATEGY 2025



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